

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJ: INITIAL REACTIONS TO PEOPLE'S POWER

1. INITIAL LOCAL REACTIONS TO RECENTLY CONCLUDED GENERAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS IN SEBHA APPEAR TO FOLLOW PREDICTABLE PATTERN. FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF LIBYANS, I.E., UNEDUCATED LOWER STRATA, WHOSE LIVES HAVE BEEN FAVORABLY AND DEMONSTRABLY AFFECTED BY THE LIBYAN REVOLUTION, DECLARATION OF PEOPLE'S POWER IS A REAL AND MOMENTOUS EVENT. THERE SEEMS TO BE A GENUINE SENSE AMONG THIS ELEMENT THAT THEY ARE TRULY PARTICIPATING IN LIBYA'S MARCH TO PROGRESS AND GREATER GLORY. HOWEVER, EVEN WITHIN THIS GROUP THERE ARE LINGERING RESERVATIONS OVER LIBYA'S ANNOUNCED LEFTWARD AND CONSEQUENTLY POSSIBLE ANTI-ISLAMIC SHIFT. IN ADDITION, THERE IS DIS-APPOINTMENT THAT THE DECLARATION OF THE PEOPLE'S CONGRESS DID NOT SPECIFY THAT THE SUNNA AND THE SAYINGS OF THE PROPHET SHOULD BE INCLUDED ALONG WITH THE HOLY KORAN AS FOUNDATION FOR LAW OF THE LAND. (COMMENT: FUTURE LIBYAN POLITICIANS OF FUNDAMENTAL ISLAMIC BENT MAY WELL FIND EXPLOITABLE ISSUES IN THESE RESERVATIONS.)

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2. FOR THE BUSINESSMEN AND TRADERS, SMALL AND LARGE, THE DECLARATIONS OF SEBHA ARE OMINOUS AND TEND TO CONFIRM THEIR GROWING FEARS OVER THE PAST YEAR THAT LIBYA IS HEADED FOR ALL OUT NATIONALIZATION AND A SOCIALISTIC FORM OF SOCIETY IN WHICH THEY WILL HAVE NO PLACE. THIS GROUP, OF COURSE, IS CONFINED LARGELY TO THE MAJOR URBAN CENTERS OF TRIPOLI AND BENGHAZI

AND IS A SMALL BUT NOT INSIGNIFICANT MINORITY.

3. FOR THE SMALL BUT GROWING EDUCATED AND/OR WESTERNIZED CLASSES, PEOPLE'S CONGRESS WAS A MONSTROUS SHAM. TO THEM THE SPECTACLE OF COL. QADHAFI, IN PRESENCE OF FOREIGN DIPLOMATS, ORDERING PEOPLE TO KEEP SILENT OR THREATENING TO MAKE ERRANT DELEGATES REMAIN STANDING THROUGHOUT THE SESSION IF THEY DID NOT PROVIDE ANSWERS HE WAS SEEKING WAS SOURCE OF SHAME WHICH WILL BRING FURTHER DISCREDIT TO LIBYA'S ALREADY TARNISHED REPUTATION.

4. ALSO OF INTEREST WAS REACTION OF COMMUNIST DIPLOMATS TO PEOPLE'S CONGRESS. NONE WERE MORE CAREFUL NOTE TAKERS NOR VOLUBLE COMMENTATORS THAN MEMBERS OF THIS GROUP. IN FACT, THE YUGOSLAV, POLISH AND EAST GERMAN AMBASSADORS BECAME, MORE OR LESS, THE OFFICIAL INTERPRETERS OF THE PROCEEDINGS FOR WESTERN DIPLOMATS. FOR THEM IT WAS APPARENTLY A FAMILIAR PROCESS AND ONE WHICH THEY UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED FROM THE STANDPOINT OF ORGANIZATION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF DESIRED RESULTS. THEY CONCLUDED THAT THE CONGRESS WAS A SUCCESS.

5. "PEOPLE'S POWER" IS VERY MUCH IN ITS INFANCY AND THERE IS LITTLE THAT CAN BE MEANSINGFULLY SAID ABOUT ITS FUTURE PROSPECTS AT THIS POINT. IT IS CERTAIN THAT WHETHER "PEOPLE'S POWER" HAS ANY REALSUBSTANCE, THE SEBHA DECLARATION IS A MAJOR POLITICAL EVENT IN THE EVOLUTION OF QADHAFI'S REVOLUTION AND POWERFUL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EVIDENCE OF HIS WILL AND DETERMINATION TO MOLD LIBYA'S FUTURE.
CARLE

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